

BOOK REVIEWS

MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PRIMARY CARE, Nick Kates and Marilyn Craven. Hogrefe and Huber Publishers, 1998. \$49.00 (hardbound).

This book was written with the intent of providing basic information regarding mental health care for persons who are primary care providers, including physicians and physician assistants, and nurses and nurse practitioners. The book consists of nineteen chapters which cover the spectrum of mental health problems. This includes assessments, evaluating families, and working with major sorts of mental health problems that occur such as depression, anxiety, psychosis, sleep disorders, and alcohol and drug problems. Each chapter is well synthesized and well outlined, including definitions, epidemiology, assessment and treatment. In particular, the chapters go into considerable detail describing the treatment of various disorders including all the medications that are currently available. This detail is in many cases more useful than what is found in much larger textbooks on the very same subject. In fact, this book also could be thought of as a practical guide book for house officers in psychiatry to carry around in their back pocket and used in the middle of the night when they are doing work-ups. There is material in the book about anything you might want to know about psychopharmacology within each diagnostic category. There is also excellent material on conducting interviews, establishing rapport with patients and their families, doing home visits, and figuring out where to refer people. Chapter 6, "The Patient in Distress," describes an array of supportive techniques that a physician can use to help a patient who is suffering, and also includes, at the end, a list of criteria as to when to refer a patient for a psychiatric assessment.

A lot of work went into this book. It was written primarily by two authors and consequently does not suffer from the usual discontinuity present in edited volumes. These two physicians obviously know what they are doing from years of critical experience. They have synthesized their wisdom into this highly useful and readable volume. I think the only drawback is the \$49 price for the hardcover. This is clearly something that should be published in a cloth cover that is small enough to fit in someone's pocket. There is an answer for almost everything in here. It's up-to-date, practical, and accurate. Health care and mental health care providers will find this very useful.

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MULTIPLE VICTIMIZATION OF CHILDREN: CONCEPTUAL, DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH, AND TREATMENT ISSUES, edited by B.B. Robbie Rossman and Mindy S. Rosenberg. New York: The Haworth Maltreatment & Trauma Press, 1998. (Co-published simultaneously as *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma*, Vol. 2. Number 1(3) 1998.) 341 pp. \$49.95 (hardcover); 24.95 (softcover).

This book is a fine resource for clinicians who do not know developmental theory and research, or developmental psychopathology. The developmental literature that can be applied to clinical work with families and maltreatment is strong and well-researched. However, the application of the majority of this work to abuse treatment has not been researched. Multiple victimization of children is not well-researched in either developmental psychopathology or in treatment.

The application of the research to multiple victimization is hypothetical at best, but this volume could be a good reference for clinicians treating families with specific symptom puzzles. The editors have attempted to merge two important areas and the effort has merit. However, this attempt could have been more articulated early in the volume and at every generalization. For example, there exists an overreliance on Eriksonian and Bowlbian theory to support claims by several authors, as though both theories have been researched well as they might apply to multiple victimization of children. It is likely that this limitation could have been discussed in depth up front, and that someone who was not aware of the lack of research concerning multiple victimization could continue reading with that in mind. The lack of rigorous, systematic research into multiple victimization makes all hypothesizing questionable.

Historical background and overview are covered well. Many highly respected people in the field are contributors. Numbering the chapters would have been helpful.

Harter's is probably the strongest chapter. One knows her theories and how they may apply to clinical outcomes of abused children after reading her. Putnam's work is respected and sound but a philosophical point of his is not held universally in psychology. Just prior to his conclusion he states that we should look to adult models to extrapolate down to children for PTSD-like symptoms. Many researchers who know developmental psychopathology (read Kazdin) disagree with this premise and view it as a stumbling block for research and treatment of children.

Generally, the accuracy of each contributor's reference is sound. Researchers who know this literature fairly well can use this volume as a quick reference. The writing style is diverse because of the nature of an edited volume, but each chapter is understandable and clear. However, more links from the editors may have been provided for the reader, or perhaps even some chapters omitted. For example, there exists some redundancy in the chapters headed by Rossman; the Cummings chapter does not deliver links between his model of family discord and multiple victimization.

A chapter about our lack of information concerning multiculturalism would have made the volume stronger, an acknowledgment that most of our child maltreatment data is based on fairly homogenous groups. Rarely are children with different ethnic backgrounds compared, and the lack of this information would seem to leave ethnic minority children more vulnerable in treatment situations. For example, we do not know if high ego control means the same outcomes for white and black abused children or how ethnicity may interact with income in this regard. Or, if minority children who have access to several adult caregivers are more resilient or vulnerable due to this situation.

In summary, the text is a good quick reference for researchers in developmental psychopathology. For clinicians with specific symptom puzzles regarding their clients, this volume could be a good resource.

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RISK MANAGEMENT WITH SUICIDAL PATIENTS, edited by Bruce Bongar, Alan L. Berman, Ronald W. Maris, Morton M. Silverman, Eric A. Harris and Wendy L. Packman. New York: Guilford Press, 1998. 197 pp., 13 tables. \$30.00 (hardcover).

In the introduction, this book describes itself as a “forum for the exploration of avoiding liability in working with the suicidal patient.” The editors have compiled a series of papers on standards of care, practical management and legal issues in working with suicidal patients. The book presents the issues well, and does not claim to offer a specific set of standards, but instead suggests some practical guidelines for working with suicidal patients. This book was written with the clinician in mind but would also be useful to administrators and lawyers.

Chapters 1, 3 and 4 are reprints of previously published articles written by some of the editors, discussing both outpatient and inpatient standards of care for working with the suicidal patient. The focus is on what can be learned from malpractice claims data. There are descriptions of the most common “failure” scenarios in clinical practice leading to patient suicide, with many examples. They include failures in evaluation, in communication and in documentation. There are useful summary tables listing the common types of failure. Chapter 2 discusses outpatient management of the suicidal patient and provides a framework for treatment planning in the outpatient setting. Chapter 5 provides a summary of pharmacologic treatments which might be used to treat underlying disorders and provides useful background information for the non-physician. Chapter 6 offers a forensic perspective on pharmacotherapy with hospitalized patients, including discharge planning and prescribing of medications. Chapter 7 discusses legal issues and risk management, including a section specifically addressing the managed care environment.

The presentation of many examples from both successful and unsuccessful lawsuits is one of the strengths of this book. The legal perspective is an important one, and it is one we are most often exposed to only after something has gone wrong. Many of the “failures” described in this book are failures in communication and/or documentation rather than failures in clinical judgement. This is an important lesson for all mental health professionals to learn early in their careers. As the way mental health services are delivered continues to change, we will need to be even more careful in communicating and documenting our concerns. There will be more opportunities for error and miscommunication as more individuals become involved in some way in a patient’s treatment, whether as providers, consultants or reviewers. A carefully thought out and well-docu-

mented treatment plan is essential to a brief hospitalization as well as to a successful outpatient course.

This book provides a good summary of treatment issues and pitfalls in working with suicidal patients. The examples from case law are always interesting to read. This book would make a suitable text for students and trainees learning about legal issues in mental health, and parts of the book would also be informative to the experienced clinician. The authors make a point of showing that there are no absolute standards, and that in many cases there have been legal decisions which might surprise some individuals, especially in inpatient settings, where multiple parties are involved. The editors have indeed succeeded in providing a "forum for the exploration of avoiding liability in working with the suicidal patient."

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BIOLOGY OF PERSONALITY DISORDERS, edited by Kenneth R. Silk, M.D. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press, 1998. 156 pp. \$25.00 (hardcover).

The book is one of the individually published monographs that make up the annual Review of Psychiatry. The overall mission of the series is to provide useful and current clinical information, linked to new research evidence. The text under review, consisting of five chapters—each of which is written by different authors, aims to provide an overview of the work undertaken to explore the biology of the dimensions that make up personality and in turn personality disorders. It offers a capita selecta, and is among the first books dedicated to the topic.

The first chapter reviews the existing data with regard to CNS neurotransmitter correlates of personality in both healthy individuals and those with personality disorders. It focuses mainly on the inverse relation between serotonin and impulsive aggression. Chapter two focuses on non-neurotransmitter biological correlates of personality disorders. Findings are arranged according to new techniques such as neuroimaging, genetics, and cognitive science. Chapter three reviews the studies examining the neurobiological basis for the four temperament dimensions proposed by Cloninger: harm avoidance, novelty seeking, reward dependence, and persistence. In chapter four we move away from basic science principles toward utilizing some of these in the treatment of patients with personality disorders. It is argued that the possibility of targeting pharmacological interventions at specific psychobiological dimensions of personality disorders still requires an extensive body of research. In the meantime, the authors suggest to target pharmacological interventions on specific measurable behavioral targets (e.g., self-harm, repetitive suicidal behavior, and treatment adherence) and various aspects of outcome (e.g., quality of life, social and/or occupational functioning), as described in their outcome-focused model. Chapter five examines the significance of biologi-

cal research for a biopsychosocial model of the personality disorders. This chapter, providing a heuristic framework for understanding the potential role of genetics and neurochemistry in personality development, actually reads more as an introduction and, to this reviewer's opinion, should be read first.

The book can be considered a brave attempt to summarize some of the research on the biology of personality disorders. Its primary significance is to contribute to the falsification of the strong beliefs among many health care professionals that personality disorders 1 should be primarily viewed as the result of environment and nurture, and 2 cannot be targeted with pharmacotherapy. In spite of these strengths, the text is not without limitations. As a review of literature, it should be noted that the text collects only some of the available models and opinions rather than comprehensively and systematically addresses the topic under review. For example, much of the existing work on biological aspects of personality is not discussed or even mentioned (e.g., the work by Eysenck, Gray, Fowles, and Depue). This limitation clearly reflects the still existing gap between the fields of research on personality pathology (pursued by psychiatrists) on the one hand and research on personality (pursued by psychologists) on the other hand. Future attempts to review the topic might benefit from bringing these respective fields closer together. As a clinician's guide, the available information is limited as well. For example, it is not clear why a new treatment model (i.e., the outcome-focused model) is introduced, while concurrent useful models (i.e., the symptom-focused model by Soloff) are paid relatively little attention.

Will researchers be able to eventually find one-to-one correspondences between personality traits on the one hand and biological or genetic markers on the other hand? Just to mention some of the complexities the field is faced with: 1 given the impact of environment on personality development, biological studies of traits can provide only approximate associations rather than specific correlates; 2 the heritable components of personality are influenced by complex interactions between multiple genes, with single transmitters being affected by more than one gene and with single genes affecting more than one transmitter system; 3 each neurotransmitter acts on several different receptor types; 4 the effects of individual neurotransmitters can be entirely different, even contradictory, at different sites of the brain. In different chapters, the book provides different answers to the question mentioned above. The author of chapter three tends to answer this question positively by arguing that the principles of genetic transmission are sufficiently simple that a unique psychobiological model of the architecture of personality can be specified. Conversely, the author of the final chapter suggests that, although we might succeed in demonstrating that biological profiles have a consistent statistical relationship to personality traits, the answer *no* to the question above is more likely. Despite the confusion the reader is left with, reading the book will make anyone appreciate and understand the specific issues and level of complexity that this particular field is faced with.

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